

When You Need a Discipleship Strategy But Don't Know Where to Begin

*Below is a new weekly series posting content from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix Book Summaries** for church leaders. **SUMS Remix** takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; and each solution is taken from a different book. As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).*

How do churches make disciples?

It is perhaps the central question churches face, and only some of them actually have a well-defined answer. As Mike Breen says, "The problem is that most of us have been educated and trained to build, serve, and lead the organization of the church. Most of us have actually never been trained to make disciples."

Do we now define disciple as someone who attends worship somewhat regularly, gives to us financially, and engages in acts of evangelism and kindness every once in a while?

Solution: Lead people to know God, not just know about God.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Building a Discipling Culture](#), Mike Breen

Building a Discipling Culture is the product of more than twenty-five years of hands-on discipleship practice in a post-Christian context that has turned into a world-wide movement, dealing specifically with making the types of missional disciples Jesus spoke of.

We all want to make disciples - most of us are just unsure how to do it.

Jesus did not command us to build the church; He called us to make disciples. *Building a Discipling Culture* shows that effective discipleship creates the church, not the other way around.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

The truth is that many churches equate discipleship with knowledge. Churches who view discipleship as simply information to be transferred want to cram as much biblical knowledge into as many people as quickly as they can.

The command of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 is to "Go...and make disciples...teaching them to *observe* everything I have commanded." The end goal of discipleship is not merely **knowing** all

Jesus commanded, but **obeying** all Jesus commanded.

And that is a big difference.

The truth of Scripture is meant to be worked out in us, not something that we hold as an abstract reality.

Why are we assuming that simply by giving people information (e.g. pray, read the Bible, read doctrinal statements, be a part of a small group) they actually know how to do it or can figure it out by themselves? I can read a book on how to perform open heart surgery. If you go into cardiac arrest, do you want me to operate on you?

We have become so acculturated in our Cartesian, Western world that we believe knowing about something and knowing something are the same thing. What we have managed to do is teach people about God. Teach them about prayer. Teach them about mission. The point isn't that they would just know about it but to know it.

Discipleship isn't a random assortment of facts and propositions and behaviors, discipleship is something that is you to the core and is completely incarnated in you. If it is information, it is information that has worked its way into you and is now part of you, in the same way that John talks about the logos being wrapped up in the person of Jesus: "The Word became flesh." It goes from being information to being knowledge.

Mike Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture*

A NEXT STEP

The discipling relationship you must have with God is a real and personal one. The Scriptures contain many examples where individuals and groups had a real, personal, and practical relationship with God. They knew God, not just about Him. What was true in the Old and New Testaments remains true today.

- Briefly describe an experience in your life when God was real and personal in His relationship with you.
- As you recall that experience, what key words or phrases stand out to you that demonstrate your knowledge of God, not just a knowledge about God?
- What challenges do you face in growing a real and personal relationship with God?
- What intentional actions must you begin in order to sustain a real and personal relationship with God?

To learn more about developing your discipleship strategy, [start a conversation with the Auxano](#)

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Taken from SUMS Remix 10-2, published March 2015

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